

JESUS CHRIST, MARRIAGE BROKER (Luke 20:27-39)

In this passage from Luke, Jesus makes it plain that the next life is not like this one. With an extraordinary and subtle appeal to Scripture, he proves the case with a striking testimony to the gift of eternal life.

1. What do you think “the afterlife” is like? Have a go at describing it!
2. Does it matter what we imagine it to be? Why – or why not?

Read Luke 20:27-36. The Sadducees were religious conservatives: they took the first five books of the Bible seriously, but were not prepared to bank on texts written later, wherein ideas of a personal life after death took shape. They thought their puzzle, riffing on the Levirate marriage provisions of Deuteronomy 25:5-10 (read if you have time), was cast-iron proof that there was no personal afterlife. Thinking Jesus to be aligned with the Pharisees on this question, they imagined they could take him down and them with him. Nothin’ doin’.

3. Consider: why is there no “getting married” in heaven?
4. What does this tell us about heaven? And about marriage?

The kingdom of heaven has broken into this world, shown above all in the life of the church. The great metaphors of the church – body, temple, sanctuary, priesthood, assembly – figure God’s people without reference to their situation as married or single, with children or without.

5. Why is that significant, and how could we translate that significance into the way we do life together?

Read Luke 20:37-39. Jesus proves his point in a very subtle reading of a text from Deuteronomy – the story of the (burning) bush. There (Exodus 3:6, 15) the Lord declares his Name to Moses – YHWH – and associates that Name with those bound to Him in covenant. Jesus’s point is that those the Lord names, to whom He makes His promise, are alive to Him, whatever their mortal state. They are eternally alive. Jesus appears to make a similar point to Martha in John 11:25-26 (read): “everyone who lives and believes in me will never die!”.

6. Do you ever think about your own death? What feelings circle around death for you?
7. How do these passages comfort you?

Pray for one another: for the assurance of eternal life, and for love to overcome the fear of death.